

Build Community; Don't Judge

Carolina Jaquez

One of the challenges of the multi-generational classroom is that people are at different stages of life. Some older adults believe that 18-year-olds are irresponsible. Some younger students believe that older adults are stuck in their ways. This kind of judgment makes it difficult for teenagers and older adults to work and learn together.

On Friday afternoons, Project Hope has community meetings that let all of us come together and express our different thoughts. These meetings help us build relationships with each other across all our differences. This coming together and sharing can be difficult. Once we had a pretty intense debate about cleaning up after ourselves in the kitchen area. Some people were mad because they didn't think it was fair that there would be a cleaning schedule and everyone would have to participate. Others thought it was only right to clean up after ourselves.

We held a tense community meeting and discussed how we were going to resolve this issue. It was difficult but not impossible to come to an understanding. We made a schedule, and everyone

was assigned to a group to clean up the kitchen at least twice a month.

Project Hope has "ground rules" to make the meetings go better. They are:

- Everyone has a turn to speak. When you have the talking piece it's your turn to express your beliefs.
- Everyone one has to be respectful and listen with warm aware attention.
- Only the person with the talking piece is allowed to speak.

We get everyone's input and then make a decision. This process helps us build community together. We get to know each other, so we are less likely to judge each other.



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Respect Yourself!

Mariam Sesay

If you respect yourself, then other people are going to respect you. Treat others the way you want to be treated. If you disrespect young people just because they are younger than you, how do you think that would feel?

It shouldn't matter if you are going to school with someone your own age or someone much younger. We all are human.

In college, all students are not the same age. But they are all in the same classes. Why shouldn't

adult basic education classes also be like that? We should be ourselves and focus on what we came to school to achieve!

Mariam Sesay is a student at Project Hope in Roxbury, MA.

